



A whole
trail of



SWEET HOMETOWN TOURS

A TRAIL GUIDE to ALABAMA'S MAIN STREETS

Main Street Alabama's new statewide roadmap
beckons all to experience Alabama's 33 designated
Main Street communities—stretching from
Appalachia to the glittering Gulf Coast.

BY JENNY SUE STUBBS

After our country's downtown
areas endured decades of
decline, Main Street Alabama
incorporated in 2010 to serve as the
state coordinating program for Main
Street America. Thanks to the work
of the organization and the Main
Street communities it directs, niche
experiences are once again enjoyed
in our state's historic districts. What
better way to celebrate the "Year of
Alabama Trails" than through a new
guide outlining the best of what the
hearts of Alabama's downtowns have
to offer?





MONTEVALLO

Montevallo has made its mark on the Main Street scene with an incredible array of public art, including its 59-foot “Bienvenidos a Montevallo” mural celebrating its Dia de los Muertos festival and the famous “tree faces” of Orr Park on the edge of its Main Street district. Here, you’ll find more than 60 trees carved by local artist Tim Tingle into fantastic human faces and other images, including squirrels and even alligators, which led to the annual Tinglewood Festival. According to Courtney Bennett, local Main



Street director, “From our murals and sculptures to our painted fire hydrants and street pole banners, creativity is showcased in every corner. Montevallo is a tight-knit community that loves to support our small businesses, our youth, our artist community and each other.”

Historic University of Montevallo is adjacent to the city’s Main Street district, adding fun, funky flare. Combine that with a calendar full of events, local dining and shopping establishments and walkability, and this small town is a must-experience destination.



ATHENS

Main Street districts are known for character, but the concept took on a new and different meaning in the wake of a devastating EF-1 tornado that hit downtown in December 2024. The city showed its character to be rooted in a heart for its community, and resilient residents showed up to build back.

Now, visitors can once again walk from restaurants, coffee shops and boutiques to Big Spring Park. Curated events like Sippin’ Cider Festival or the Chocolate Walk help make



the most of its Main Street district spaces. And the more-than-two-centuries-old Athens State University also lends a special vibe.

While recovery is ongoing, local Main Street director Tere Richardson explains, “Downtown Athens is open for business! Our small businesses are the heart of our community, and together, we can help them overcome this storm.”



GADSDEN

It's easy to see revitalization has long been taking shape in this northeast Alabama town. With two art museums downtown, it's no surprise other public art installments are found in places like City Hall, where green spaces host important sculptures. A birding trail as well as local boutiques, eateries and bars round out the eclectic mix, including Back Forty Beer Company.



Downtown Gadsden Director Kay Moore notes that residents relish nuanced events. "Our businesses promote the Shop Small feel," she says. "We believe that the special events focused on shopping and dining, such as our Girls' Night Outs, Shop Small for Fall and Christmas Open House events encourage our local residents to come downtown and support the businesses that support them."

A LITTLE LOOK AT

THE BIG LIST:



ALABAMA-TOMBIGBEE REGION:

Marion, Monroeville

CENTRAL ALABAMA REGION:

Montgomery, Wetumpka

EAST ALABAMA REGION:

Alexander City, Anniston, Gadsden, Heflin, Lafayette, Oxford, Talladega

GREATER BIRMINGHAM REGION:

4th Avenue District, Birmingham REV, Calera, Columbiana, Jasper, Leeds, Montevallo

LEE-RUSSELL REGION:

Opelika

NORTH-CENTRAL REGION:

Decatur

Visit sweethometowns.com to find the fun deets on all of these amazing Alabama Main Street communities.

NORTHWEST ALABAMA REGION:

Florence, Russellville

SOUTH ALABAMA REGION:

Atmore, Foley

SOUTHEAST ALABAMA REGION:

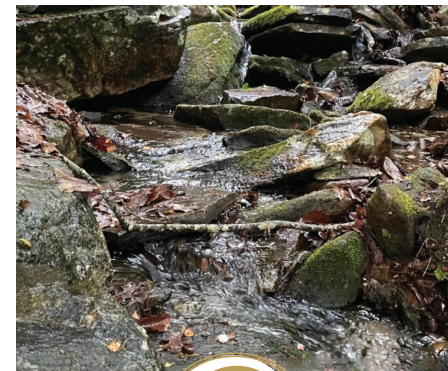
Elba, Enterprise, Eufala

TOP OF ALABAMA REGION:

Athens, Fort Payne, Scottsboro, South Huntsville

WEST ALABAMA REGION:

Centreville, Demopolis



HEFLIN

Many regional, state and national trails tie into this town, earning it the nickname "Alabama's Trail Town." From wine tasting to trail running to horseback riding and cycling, people come from all over the country to experience this beautiful place.

The Heflin Spur off the well-known Pinhoti National Recreational Trail leads to Cahulga Creek Park and into downtown Heflin. The Lloyd Owens Canoe Trail for paddling and

the Appalachian Highlands Scenic Byway, perfect for a leisurely drive, bring it all together. And experiences in the Talladega National Forest and Cheaha State Park (home to Mt. Cheaha, Alabama's highest peak) next door add more fresh-air fun.

When you've worked up an appetite, stop in for a taste of the local culinary scene with a snack or meal at one of multiple locally owned restaurants, like Almost Italy, featuring pasta favorites.